

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Healthcare Supply of Personal Protective Equipment

Webinar for Healthcare Professionals

Strategies for Healthcare Systems Preparedness and Optimizing N95 Supplies.

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CDC continues to monitor the COVID-19 situation in the United States and around the world. CDC has taken early and aggressive actions to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, in the United States, through [combination of proven public health actions](#). At the same time, CDC is preparing for the possibility that the COVID-19 situation in the U.S. could become more serious, with sustained community transmission, and is taking steps to make sure there are enough supplies and appropriate guidance to prevent spread of disease, especially among healthcare personnel caring for patients with COVID-19.

Healthcare personnel can protect themselves when caring for patients by adhering to infection prevention and control practices, which includes the appropriate use of engineering controls, administrative controls, and personal protective equipment (PPE). CDC has issued [guidance](#) recommending the use of PPE for healthcare personnel caring for patients with confirmed or possible SARS-CoV-2 infection. Employers and healthcare personnel are reminded that PPE is only one aspect of safe care of patients with COVID-19. For the general public, CDC does not recommend the use of facemasks or respirators. CDC guidance is based on what we know about SARS-CoV-2 and what we know about similar coronaviruses like SARS and MERS.

CDC also understands the importance of providing guidance that healthcare facilities can implement, given supplies of PPE available. CDC communicates regularly with healthcare industry partners, as well as PPE manufacturers and distributors, to assess availability of PPE. At this time, some partners are reporting higher than usual demand for selected N95 respirators and facemasks. If information about market availability changes, updates will be posted on this page.

Based on the current COVID-19 situation and availability of PPE, CDC has specific recommendations, summarized below. As we learn more about COVID-19 and as the needs of the response or availability of PPE within U.S. healthcare facilities changes, we will update our guidance.



Who needs PPE:

Patients with confirmed or possible SARS-CoV-2 infection should wear a **facemask** when being evaluated medically.

Healthcare personnel should adhere to [Standard, Contact, and Airborne](#) Precautions, including the use of eye protection (e.g., goggles or a face shield) when caring for patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection. These precautions include the use of PPE, including NIOSH-approved N95 respirators, gowns, gloves, face shield/eye protection, etc. This includes, but is not limited to, surgical N95 respirators.



Who does not need PPE:

CDC does NOT currently recommend the general public use facemasks. Instead, CDC recommends following [everyday preventive actions](#), such as washing your hands, covering your cough, and staying home when you are sick.

Summary as of February 25, 2020



Manufacturers:

Cases of COVID-19 are being reported in numerous countries [around the world](#). Given decreases in exports from select countries (e.g., China, India, Taiwan) and increases in demand due to the global outbreak, manufacturers of select types of PPE are reporting increased volume of orders and challenges in meeting order demands. Specific challenges are being reported for N95 respirators and facemasks. Orders received are up to 10-fold normal demand for these items. Plans for surge manufacturing globally are underway.



Distributors:

Distributors of select types of PPE are reporting an increased volume of orders from customers and challenges in meeting order demands for personal protective equipment, specifically for N95 respirators and facemasks. Due to decreased exports from overseas by manufacturers, distributors are reporting that these items are being placed on allocation, and orders are being filled based on historical demand for existing customers. At present, shortfalls may be anticipated to continue for the next 3–4 months.



Healthcare Systems:

U.S. healthcare systems are reporting higher than normal use for N95 respirators, due to fit testing and stockpiling, to prepare for possible widespread COVID-19 transmission. Orders are being placed in higher volumes to meet these needs. Some healthcare systems have begun reporting that orders for N95 respirators and facemasks are not being filled or are only being partially filled by distributors. In addition, major pharmacy chains have reported stock outs of N95 respirators and facemasks with delays in replenishment of inventory.

CDC is encouraging healthcare systems to implement strategies to conserve supplies.



Strategies for Optimizing Supply of N95 Respirators

CDC offers strategies for healthcare settings on how to optimize supplies of N95 respirators in the face of decreasing supply. These strategies are organized using the occupational health and safety hierarchy of controls approach.



Frequently Asked Questions about Personal Protective Equipment

CDC answers frequently asked questions about personal protective equipment for healthcare personnel and the general public.